Radio Days – 2009-03-14

Tip of the Week – Viruses "R" Us

This is the same *Tip of the Week* as we had last week. I have been reading all about how to keep your computer safe on the internet over the last few weeks so that I can help you keep safe. I have two computers: a production computer and a test computer. During the week I started my test computer while I was using the production computer. Because I can only use one computer at a time I have one screen, keyboard and mouse to control both. Everything is joined by a *KVM* (keyboard, video, mouse) switch and when I switched to the test computer I discovered that it had the same problem as last week's client.

Physician, heal thyself! This will involve some serious work. It will either mean re-installing Windows or getting a more-experienced person to remove the problem.

Online Security: Firewalls

Firewalls are a pain in the neck! And that is the polite way of saying it! It is also the way that firewalls are meant to work, just like a bouncer at a nightclub.

The ideal firewall would know all about every safe program, would allow those safe programs to run without restrictions and would block all other programs from running. Unfortunately this is pie-in-the-sky thinking, but it is the theory behind all firewalls. Some firewalls are more intrusive than others, some are more effective than others but none is perfect. Despite the fact that it sometimes blocks wanted processes, I still keep coming back to ZoneAlarm as my preferred firewall. It has improved a lot over the last few years and I am now happy to recommend it for all my clients.

For some time now I have been evaluating Comodo Internet Security as a possible preferred solution to all internet evils, but I keep being interrupted by Comodo firewall alerts. There is one alert in particular that has almost driven me mad. This alert could not be stopped except by uninstalling either the firewall or the other program, so I uninstalled the other program. Was this a mistake?

There are other firewalls out there: too many for one person to evaluate in a lifetime. For this reason I have to rely on the advice of respected mentors who have the time and resources to do this. Firewalls are also very complex programs, and people with the skills to check them are few and far between. All this means that I have been, to a large extent, passing on the results of other peoples' testing plus my own experience.

My recent conclusion: for the vast majority of people the best be is to use ZoneAlarm as your firewall. It seems to be as good as many others and far less intrusive. The most important thing about a firewall is that it is used: if it is uninstalled immediately, or if all its alerts are allowed without question, then it will be of no use. A firewall which is of no use should be removed immediately because there can be nothing worse than a false sense of security.

Comodo firewall is just too intrusive for my likes so it will come off my computer. As I am using the Comodo anti-virus I will also switch to AVG anti-virus.

Websites

AVG anti-virus	free.avg.com
ZoneAlarm	www.zonealarm.com
Comodo	www.comodo.com